IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as indicated, strikeout or double bracketed portions deleted, underlined items added, as applicable.

Page 9 the last paragraph starting at line 24 and continuing to page 10, amend the paragraph as follows:

The liquid that does not pass, i.e., cannot be forced, through the NF membrane element 25 is the concentrate stream available at the upstream side of NF membrane element 25. The concentrate stream containing most if not all the hardness ions and possibly a small amount of brine, is directed to a throttling valve 31 and to a drain or septic tank. Throttling valve 31 creates back pressure at the upstream side of NF membrane element 25 necessary force liquid throught the NF membrane, and may comprise an orifice or other pressure-dropping device. Throttling valve 31 must maintain the pressure on the upstream side of NF membrane element 25 higher than in brine tank 43. The pressure drop across NF membrane element 25 then equals approximately the ~~atmospheric~~ pressure drop across throttling valve 31, assuming the brine tank 43 is not sealed.

Page 10 the last paragraph starting at line 14, amend the paragraph as follows:

Preferably, the NF membrane element 25 has a spiral-wound configuration, although other configurations are possible, such as

capillary fiber, tubular, or plate and frame. The following examples, without limitation, are types of NF membranes that are acceptable for use in the present invention, although their manufacturers may [[nor]]or may not have their products evaluated for this application: a spiral wound NF-270 membrane, made by Dow Filmtec; a spiral-wound XN45 membrane, by TriSep Corp.; a spiral-wound SR2 membrane, by Koch Membrane Systems; a spiral-wound NF membrane using a special polymer, by Hydranautics; a spiral-wound NF membrane using a special polymer, by GE Osmonics; and a capillary fiber NF50 membrane, by Norit X-Flow.